

better prepared to advance America's international interests on cyber policy.

Madam Speaker, that is exactly what this Cyber Diplomacy Act will do. Our allies and adversaries are prioritizing international engagement to set the standards and rules that govern how the internet is structured and used. The United States has always been a leader in this space, and now is the time to redouble our efforts to ensure we remain an influential voice in establishing the rules of the road.

It is critical that the United States prioritize our diplomatic efforts in this area and work with our partners and allies to establish agreed-upon norms. To keep the internet open and accessible, we must push back against countries that will exploit the internet to pilfer our intellectual property and hack into our country's most sensitive information, and which seek to derail international norms.

This bill is critical to supporting these key priorities. It authorizes the Bureau of International Cyberspace Policy to lead the State Department's cyber diplomatic efforts, including on issues relating to international cybersecurity, internet access and freedom, and international cyber threats, including countering terrorists' use of cyberspace.

This bill also directs the President to devise a strategy related to U.S. engagement with foreign governments on international norms with respect to responsible state behavior in cyberspace.

I am also pleased that in authorizing this office, we make clear bipartisan congressional intent that the Bureau of International Cyberspace Policy is comprised of a diverse workforce. Like the rest of our national security policy establishments, we know that ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce improves the effectiveness of national security activities, and this bill makes that intent very clear.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this critical and, again, bipartisan measure that will reassert American leadership on this important issue, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased the House is considering the Cyber Diplomacy Act that I reintroduced this Congress with Chairman MEEKS and a strong roster of bipartisan cosponsors. I also want to thank my good friend from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN), my co-chair on the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus. Over the past decade, he and I have worked very hard to advance critical cyber legislation like the law that set up the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency at the Department of Homeland Security.

With today's bill, we are taking the protection provided by CISA to the United States to the international stage and, as the chairman mentioned, providing rules of the road, which we do not have today.

The United States has strategic and economic interests in ensuring the internet remains open, reliable, and secure around the world. Unfortunately, not all governments agree.

For example, Russia and China are aggressively promoting their vision of "cyber sovereignty," which emphasizes state control over cyberspace and tramples individual freedoms. That is why the United States and our allies must be prepared to advance our own vision for cyberspace.

The Cyber Diplomacy Act gives the State Department the necessary tools to work with our allies and partners to stop the spread of misinformation, to stop the cyberattacks, and to stop the imposition of their so-called cyber security.

Madam Speaker, a new ambassador will be given the authority to establish critical cyber norms and standards that do not exist today to help define what is good behavior and what is bad.

Let me say that when the SolarWinds attack occurred, in the past, there were no consequences to bad behavior with the Russians or the Chinese, and I was very supportive and proud that President Biden struck back with sanctions against Russia for this bad behavior. That is what this office is really all about.

Without these clear guidelines, it is not possible to mount a strong response to our adversaries' destructive behavior. This bill is long overdue. To me, it is the last piece in terms of our cyber role in the Federal Government, now taking it to the international stage with our allies around the world.

Madam Speaker, again, I want to thank Chairman MEEKS, Mr. LANGEVIN, and all of the bipartisan cosponsors. The recent high-profile attacks remind us that what happens in cyberspace is vitally important to the United States and our allies and partners around the world. This act will enhance our ability to protect and promote our national security, our ability to compete, and the freedoms and ideals America represents to the world.

A decade ago, we had to determine what is the cyber role—or maybe even 15—what the role is of the Federal Government. We knew the Department of Defense and NSA had great offensive capabilities. We needed a civilian agency to work with the private sector to share threat information, and that became the beginning of the cybersecurity agency at the Department of Homeland Security. And, of course, the FBI investigates. But we have never had any international norms or standards or, as the chairman said, the rules of the road.

This bill, as I said, is long overdue. The Russians influenced our elections. There are, finally, sanctions against them. But before that, few consequences occurred. When the Chinese stole 23 million security clearances, including my own, there was zero response from the United States of America.

When these attacks occurred, and when our intellectual property has been stolen, so much so that Keith Alexander, the NSA Director, said it was the "greatest transfer of wealth in human history," with no consequence, we finally shut down the Chinese consulate in Houston because of the tremendous theft of intellectual property through the Texas Medical Center in my home State, including research and development on the vaccine. Then there was a Texas A&M professor being indicted for espionage for giving NASA data to the Chinese. This has to stop.

This act, this cyber diplomacy bill, will ensure that, at the international level, the United States is respected and that we are going to work with our allies to provide the norms and standards that are so desperately needed to better protect our interests and the interests of our allies.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1251, the Cyber Diplomacy Act, introduced by my friend and the ranking member, Mr. MCCAUL, is bipartisan legislation that is essential to America's national security and positioning our country to meet the current and future threats in cyberspace head-on.

This bill will give the State Department the tools it needs to further secure peace, stability, and economic prosperity for the United States in the cyber realm now and in the future.

Again, I hope all of my colleagues join both Mr. MCCAUL and myself in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1800

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1251, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE OF BELARUS AND THEIR DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS AND CONDEMNING ELECTION RIGGING AND SUBSEQUENT VIOLENT CRACKDOWNS ON PEACEFUL PROTESTERS

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 124) supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations and condemning the election rigging and subsequent violent

crackdowns on peaceful protesters by the illegitimate Lukashenka regime, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 124

Whereas the Republic of Belarus held a presidential election on August 9, 2020, that was neither free nor fair;

Whereas the presidential election took place without appropriate observation from local independent groups and international delegations;

Whereas since the presidential election, Belarusians have demonstrated their strong desire and commitment to a democratic future by organizing peaceful protests in Minsk and across the country;

Whereas Belarusian civil society, led by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, has called for the resignation of Alyaksandr Lukashenka, the peaceful transition of power, the organization of new, free, and fair elections and the release of all political prisoners;

Whereas Belarusian opposition leaders have faced intimidation, harassment, and detention, including direct threats leading to the forced exile of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in Lithuania as well as the kidnapping and imprisonment of Maria Kalesnikava and other opposition leaders;

Whereas in the months since the election, Belarusian authorities have arbitrarily detained and brutally assaulted tens of thousands of peaceful protesters, journalists, and opposition figures, of which hundreds remain in detention;

Whereas human rights groups have documented hundreds of horrific accounts of torture, including sexual violence and rape, along with other instances ill-treatment and excessive force used against detainees arrested for peaceful protest;

Whereas on August 13 and 14, 2020, relatives of detainees held in the infamous “Akrestsina” detention facility in Minsk recorded the sounds of “incessant beatings which were clearly audible in the street, and numerous voices screaming out in agony with some begging for mercy”;

Whereas thousands of Belarusians have fled to neighboring countries seeking political asylum;

Whereas independent journalists and the free media have faced intimidation, violence, mass arrests and prosecution, with many foreign journalists being stripped of their accreditation;

Whereas Katsyaryna Andreieva and Darya Chultsovatwo, two journalists who work for Belsat, an independent Polish-based satellite television station aimed at Belarus, have each been sentenced to two years in prison simply for reporting live from a rally in Minsk in November 2020;

Whereas Ihar Losik, a popular Belarusian blogger on Telegram, went on a hunger strike for 6 weeks to protest the politically-motivated charges that he helped organize riots after the fraudulent presidential election;

Whereas member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), of which the United States and Belarus are members, invoked paragraph 12 of the 1991 Moscow Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE (Moscow Mechanism) to establish a mission of experts to review allegations of human rights violations;

Whereas the OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations related to the presidential elections of August 9, 2020, in

Belarus, published November 5, 2020, concluded that there was “overwhelming evidence that the presidential elections of 9 August 2020 [had] been falsified and that massive and systematic human rights violations [had] been committed by the Belarusian security forces in response to peaceful demonstrations and protests”;

Whereas women have played a leading role in peaceful demonstrations across the country, protesting the police brutality and mass detentions by wearing red and white, carrying flowers, and forming “solidarity chains”;

Whereas the information technology (IT) industry in Belarus has played a prominent role in the democratic movement by demanding an end to violent oppression, as well as creating safe platforms for demonstrators to communicate and track people who have been detained or went missing during mass detentions;

Whereas Belarusian authorities have continually disrupted internet channels in an attempt to limit communication among demonstrators and targeted lead technology companies and their employees advocating for democracy;

Whereas Belarusian state-owned television channels have encouraged violence against peaceful demonstrators;

Whereas a recent survey of IT specialists found that 15 percent of IT specialists working in Belarus have already relocated to neighboring countries, and over 40 percent of IT specialists no longer want to work in Belarus, resulting in a devastating loss of talent for Belarus, possibly permanently damaging the Belarusian technology industry along with the Belarusian economy;

Whereas hundreds of former law enforcement officers in Belarus who have defected in defiance of illegal orders to commit human rights violations and cover up crimes against civilians and those who have assisted law enforcement officers in defecting have faced harassment, financial penalties, arrest, detention, and other punitive measures;

Whereas several peaceful demonstrators have died as a result of police violence, including 31-year-old Roman Bondrenko who was violently beaten by plainclothes police officers and, as a result, suffered head injuries that resulted in his death;

Whereas Belarusian universities continue to expel students and dismiss educators and researchers for participating in peaceful protests;

Whereas child protective services have threatened multiple civic activists with termination of parental rights for bringing minor children to peaceful protests;

Whereas factory workers at state-owned enterprises have been continuously harassed for trying to organize independent trade unions and have been forced to sign political letters opposing sanctions by the European Union under threat of termination of their employment;

Whereas a transatlantic community of legislators has emerged in support of uplifting the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people;

Whereas international advocacy, including by co-host Latvia, succeeded in preventing the illegitimate Government of Belarus from hosting the 2021 Ice Hockey World Championship;

Whereas the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Canada have enacted sanctions and other punitive measures against dozens of individuals and entities found responsible for the perpetration of violence against peaceful demonstrators, opposition members, and journalists, among others;

Whereas Alyaksandr Lukashenka continues to undermine the sovereignty and

independence of Belarus through efforts to integrate Belarus into a so-called “Union States” under the control of Russia;

Whereas the House of Representatives passed the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020 with unanimous consent, sending a clear message of overwhelming, bipartisan support for the democratic movement in Belarus;

Whereas the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020 was signed into law via the fiscal year 2021 omnibus spending bill, expanding the President’s authority to impose sanctions related to Belarus, including on Russian individuals who have undermined Belarus’ sovereignty, as well as authorizing increased assistance to counter internet censorship and surveillance technology, support women advocating for freedom and human rights, and support political refugees fleeing the crackdown in Belarus, among other things; and

Whereas the Belarusian opposition, led by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, organized a Day of Solidarity on February 7, 2020, where countries, cities, and political and elected leaders, as well as everyday citizens around the world demonstrated their support for the six months of historic peaceful protests since the fraudulent presidential election that took place on August 9, 2020: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) finds that the August 9, 2020, presidential election in Belarus was neither free nor fair and, therefore, does not recognize the government-announced results or Alyaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimate President of Belarus;

(2) calls for new free and fair elections under Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe observation;

(3) affirms that the people of Belarus have the right to determine the future of Belarus without unwelcome intervention from the Russian Federation or any outside actors in violation of Belarusian independence and sovereignty;

(4) condemns the human rights violations committed by Belarusian authorities, including against peaceful demonstrators, civil society activists, opposition leaders, students, educators, employees at state-owned enterprises, medical personnel, and journalists, and calls for such authorities to halt any further acts of violence against civilians;

(5) calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners and those unlawfully detained in connection with the peaceful demonstrations including independent journalists and family members of United States citizens;

(6) recognizes the sacrifices and bravery of the Belarusian people and the incredible organization by Belarusian women to peacefully demand a free and fair democratic process while enduring the state-sponsored violence that followed the August 9, 2020, election;

(7) calls on Alyaksandr Lukashenka and Belarusian authorities to engage in an open and constructive dialogue with the opposition members and other stakeholders to bring about a peaceful transition of power;

(8) calls for the protection of civil society actors and members of the opposition against arbitrary arrest and violence while conducting peaceful discussions relating to the peaceful transition of power in Belarus;

(9) recognizes the Coordination Council established by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya as a legitimate institution to participate in a dialogue on a peaceful transition of power;

(10) urges continued cooperation among the United States and its transatlantic allies

and partners to explore avenues in support of the democratic movement in Belarus;

(11) calls for further targeted sanctions coordinated between the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, and other allies and partners against Belarusian authorities who committed human rights violations and engaged in activities that resulted in the falsification of the August 9, 2020, election results;

(12) encourages when considering, in coordination with transatlantic partners, the sanctioning of Belarusian state-owned companies that have directly violated the rights of their workers as a result of their participation in or in connection to the ongoing democratic movement in Belarus that the Administration take into consideration the potential implications of making these companies more vulnerable to takeovers by Russian or Chinese state-owned companies;

(13) calls on the transatlantic community to review and consider reassessing any financial assistance that supports the Lukashenka regime, including participation in state debt issuances or procurement contracts;

(14) supports increasing funds available for foreign assistance to Belarusian civil society groups as well as legal assistance for activists and independent journalists, among others, as called for in the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020;

(15) urges the President to provide the United States Agency for Global Media with a surge capacity (as such term is defined in section 316 of the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6216)) for programs and activities in Belarus, including to protect the brave independent journalists reporting from within Belarus as called for in the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020;

(16) calls for an international investigation into the human rights abuses committed during and after the August 9, 2020, presidential election; and

(17) continues to support the aspirations of the people of Belarus for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and reaffirms that the fulfillment of such aspirations is critical to ensuring the continued strength of Belarusian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 124.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 124.

This resolution, introduced by the chair of the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber, Mr. KEATING, my good friend, is an excellent measure that solidifies this body's already strong bipartisan support for the people of Belarus. I also

thank the ranking member for his work.

After Alyaksandr Lukashenka stole the August 9, 2020, elections, the Belarusian people, led by thousands of women dressed in white and fearless opposition leaders, including Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, peacefully took to the streets in historic numbers to demand the right to chart their own democratic future, a future free of Lukashenka's dictatorial grip.

Tragically, but unsurprisingly, these peaceful protestors were met with the same brutal, violent tactics that have defined Lukashenka's nearly three-decades-long rule. In his desperate attempt to cling to power, thousands were beaten, injured, and illegally detained without due process by security forces. Meanwhile, critical access to the internet, international broadcasting, and other forms of communication and expression were cut off to suppress the dissent, control the flow of information, and prevent the opposition from organizing any further.

But the resolve of the Belarusian people, the brave, peaceful protestors, the opposition in exile, and the vibrant Belarusian diaspora has not wavered. The resolve of the United States, our allies, and this body must not waver either.

With the passing of this resolution, the House shines a spotlight on the illegitimacy of the Lukashenka regime and his abhorrent human rights violations.

We must continue to build on the work of the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, an effort led by another distinguished member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and, as indicated by Ranking Member MCCAUL, a longtime champion for human rights in Belarus, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. We thank him for his work.

By passing this good, bipartisan resolution, the House will strengthen its longstanding commitment and record on democracy and human rights. We will continue to demonstrate that we stand in solidarity with the freedom-loving Belarusians, who continue to struggle for their fundamental democratic and human rights every day. We do this hand in hand with our allies and partners across the Atlantic.

Madam Speaker, I stand today not only to support this measure, but in support of democracy and the sanctity of the democratic process and solidarity with the people of Belarus.

This is a very important resolution. I support it and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to join my colleagues today to express our support for the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations.

There is no question that Alyaksandr Lukashenka rigged the presidential

election in Belarus this past August. He is an illegitimate leader who will never be recognized by the community of democratic nations. The scale of the electoral fraud was unprecedented, as was the violent crackdown by Lukashenka's cronies afterwards.

The reports of peaceful protestors being beaten, tortured, and arbitrarily detained and killed are appalling. In a cowardly attempt to conceal their heinous crimes, the regime has repressed independent media, disrupted internet access, and expelled and detained countless journalists.

Given this despicable human rights situation in Belarus, I commend the Biden administration's decision today to renew sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises.

Despite the terror inflicted upon them, the Belarusian people have refused to relent. They continue to demand a free and fair vote. Their courage is truly inspiring.

This resolution reminds the corrupt Lukashenka regime that the United States Congress supports the people of Belarus. We echo their calls for the immediate release of more than 300 political prisoners and all of those unlawfully detained by the regime. We also join them in demanding new, free, and fair elections to be held in Belarus.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber; an esteemed member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; and the author of this important bill.

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, my friend, GREGORY MEEKS of New York, for yielding and for his leadership on this issue.

I also thank the ranking member, my friend and colleague, MICHAEL MCCAUL of Texas, for his support and leadership. I also thank the longtime leader of this cause, Representative CHRIS SMITH, for his support. I thank them both for their bipartisan support.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 124.

Today marks just over 8 months since an openly fraudulent presidential election took place in Belarus. In that time, Belarusians have made it clear by marching in the street en masse, with a pronounced leadership of brave women, that they want and need democracy in Belarus.

Despite the peaceful nature of these events, protestors have been beaten and arrested, and opposition leaders have either been forced out of the country, like Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya; or jailed, like Maria Kalesnikava.

This resolution, inspired by the courage of those taking to the streets to defend democracy, makes it clear to the people of Belarus and to the international community that the United

States House of Representatives has reviewed the facts and determined that the 2020 Belarus presidential election was neither free nor fair, and that Alyaksandr Lukashenka cannot and must not be recognized as Belarus's legitimate president.

The resolution also strongly condemns the heinous human rights violations that have been committed by Belarusian authorities and underlines that Belarus is a sovereign nation, whose people have the right to self-determination.

As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber, I held a hearing in March, where we heard firsthand from presidential candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya about the unprecedented violence and verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual assault of peaceful protestors. In their fight for democracy, the Belarusian people have endured unprecedented repression and many protestors have been left severely wounded, and at least eight have been murdered by this reprehensible regime.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is a vital signal of support for the democratic movement in Belarus, that their sacrifice will not be forgotten, and their calls for recognition will not go unanswered.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution and send a clear message that the United States is paying close attention to the human rights situation in Belarus and will continue to support the people of Belarus in their fight for a new, free, and fair election.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights; and also the author of the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act that was signed into law last year.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding and for his leadership, as well as Chairman MEEKS. I especially want to thank Chairman KEATING for authoring this very, very important resolution and for his hearing that he held in March on the situation in Belarus.

Madam Speaker, the resolution condemns Alyaksandr Lukashenka's ongoing and ever-worsening brutality and crackdown on peaceful protestors.

As my colleagues know, the leading opposition presidential candidate, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who almost certainly won the election in August and helped form the Coordination Council as a means to seek a peaceful transition of power, needs our consistent and robust support and encouragement.

Today, Ms. Tsikhanouskaya is in exile in Lithuania, where she continues to rally the Belarusian people and the world and to demand democracy and human rights for her nation, no matter how long it takes.

More than 8 months have passed since the stolen August presidential election, and about 5 months since President Trump signed the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, which I authored.

Let me point out to my colleagues that I first authored the Belarus Democracy Act in the year 2004. It was enacted into law and reauthorized in 2006 and 2011. What it did was focus on denying visas to human rights abusers and made people who are singled out ineligible for participating in our economy.

In retaliation, I was told I could not visit Belarus. I was denied a visa repeatedly. I finally got there twice and raised human rights issues with Lukashenka himself.

Let me just say that a resolution like this has real impact. Just last week, as a result of an outcry from human rights organizations, the government released Tatsiana Hatsura-Yavorska, the director of the Watch Docs Film Festival in Belarus, and they dropped the charges because of the outcry.

Again, I want to thank Mr. KEATING, the chairman, for doing this.

Let me remind my colleagues, too, that the Russians continue to play a very, very destructive role in the country. This past week alone, Russian authorities detained Yuras Zyankovich, a Belarusian lawyer and U.S. citizen.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MEIJER), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. MEIJER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 124, a resolution to support the people of Belarus in their efforts against corruption and kleptocracy.

On August 9, 2020, Belarus held a presidential election marred by credible reports of widespread election manipulation. Not surprisingly, the Belarusian dictator, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who has ruled with an iron fist for nearly three decades, commanded an authoritarian 80 percent of the vote.

Since August, Belarusians have taken to the streets peacefully to express their desire for self-determination. Instead of heeding their calls, the regime has responded with extreme violence, arbitrary detention, torture, and other systematic violations of human rights.

This resolution sends a clear message that we in Congress support the Belarusian people and their aspirations for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote from all of my colleagues. Passage of this resolution will send a message that we in Congress stand against the violent crackdown of the Lukashenka regime and stand with the people of Belarus.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Today, the people of Belarus know that they are not alone, that they have the support of the United States Congress and the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1815

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I join with Ranking Member MCCAUL that this resolution makes it clear that the United States will not be silent on human rights violations as perpetrated by the illegitimate Lukashenko regime and we stand with the Belarusian people in their peaceful fight for democracy. I hope all join in supporting this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 124, as amended.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE ACT OF 2021

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 965) to establish a comprehensive United States Government initiative to build the capacity of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 965

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Young African Leaders Initiative Act of 2021" or "YALI Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Young African Leaders Initiative, launched in 2010, is a signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders;

(2) Africa is a continent of strategic importance and it is vital for the United States to support strong and enduring partnerships with the next generation of African leaders; and

(3) the United States Government should prioritize investments to build the capacity of emerging young African leaders in sub-Saharan Africa, including through efforts to enhance leadership skills, encourage entrepreneurship, strengthen public administration and the role of civil society, and connect young African leaders continentally and